

International Education: China
“The Old Demon” by Pearl S. Buck

This lesson can take from two class periods to one week. The short story “The Old Demon” by Pearl Buck can be taught alone or tied to a literary essay assignment that focuses on providing evidence from the text to support a literary analysis paper.

I. Content:

I want my students to be able to:

- A. Learn to support literary opinion with facts taken from a text
- B. Learn some Chinese history and geography in order to understand the context of the story
- C. Determine how an author develops a character
- D. Contrast ignorance and stupidity
- E. Pre-write and write a literary essay that references the original text using internal notation

II. Prerequisites:

The students should have:

- A. A general understanding of the genre of short story
 - i. Definitions or access to definitions of character and dialogue
- B. A basic knowledge of internal notation

III. Instructional Objectives(s):

The student will:

- A. Gain a simple understanding of China’s geography and part of China’s history
- B. Learn how an author develops a character through dialogue and action
- C. Make evaluations of a literary character by evaluating evidence in the text
- D. Learn to support literary opinion with examples from the original text
- E. Practice the pre-writing and revision stages of process writing

IV. Materials and Equipment:

Teacher: Lesson Packet (This printed lesson plan)
Teacher Handout #1: China Time Line
Teacher Handout #2: China Fact Sheet
“Old Demon” by Pearl S. Buck (*Prentice Hall: Literature Bronze*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1996.)
Web sites (sites are listed at the appropriate places in the lesson plan)
Teacher Handout #3: Characterization PowerPoint (could be used as handouts or notes)
Teacher Handout #4: Essay Rubric
Teacher Handout #5: Extension Activity
SMART Board or overhead (optional)

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Student: **Teacher Handout #1:** China Timeline
"Old Demon" by Pearl Buck
Teacher Handout #6: Old Mrs. Wang character map
Teacher Handout #4: Essay Rubric
Inspiration software and computers (optional)

V. Instructional Procedure:

A. Provide background knowledge. This could be accomplished through a student research approach, or a teacher overview depending on the amount of time available.

- i. Have a volunteer student find China and the Yellow River on a map. (You could use a classroom map, or the one found at this URL: <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/asia/china/>) You can point out how the vast majority of the population in China is located near the main sources of water including the coast line and the three main rivers.
- ii. Student Research Approach: Use the China Timeline (**Teacher Handout #1**) worksheet to assign students to small groups. I like to use the jigsaw method for this step. I assign each student a number and a letter. In this case there would be four number groups, as there are four research topics. The number groups will research the four historical topics starting with the web sites I've provided. You can have them find other resources if you have more time. They could then report back to their letter groups and share their findings. You can make as many letter groups as necessary for the size of your class.
- iii. Teacher Overview: If time does not permit, the teacher can use the China Fact Sheet (**Teacher Handout #2**) and share some information about China. The teacher can also review some of the pertinent historical background that is explained in the links from the China Timeline (**Teacher Handout #1**). If you have a projector, it can be useful to use the links to the websites to illustrate.
- iv. Define the terms stupid, ignorant, and wise.
 1. **Stupid:** Slow to learn or understand; obtuse. Tending to make poor decisions or careless mistakes. Marked by a lack of intelligence or care; foolish or careless: *a stupid mistake*.
 2. **Ignorant:** Lacking education or knowledge. Showing or arising from a lack of education or knowledge: *an ignorant mistake*. Unaware or uninformed.
 3. **Wise:** having or prompted by wisdom or discernment; "a wise leader"; "a wise and perceptive comment" marked by

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the exercise of good judgment or common sense in practical matters

B. Experience the short story.

- i. Read the short story "The Old Demon" by Pearl Buck. *Prentice Hall: Literature Bronze*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1996.

I like to read it aloud to the class so I can model active reading skills like questioning, predicting, and checking for understanding. (*I try to point out places where Buck develops the many facets of Old Mrs. Wang's character like where her new husband's friends call her a "pretty piece of meat" and she is pleased, but also where she chooses to leave his hand in purgatory if that's all he's got left.*)

- ii. Encourage the students to react to the story. Try to allow them to develop opinions without correction. One approach is to use small reading circles with assigned roles including: reader, scribe, and speaker. It's often good to assign mixed-ability groups. After the discussions, the speaker can present their reactions to the class. Some possible discussion starter questions follow.

1. Why do you suppose the people continue to rebuild along the Yellow River when it continues to flood?
2. What kind of position does Old Mrs. Wang have in this community? How do you know?
3. Why do the people run to see the hole from the bomb when the planes come?
4. Why does Mrs. Wang help the Japanese pilot?
5. Do you think she would have helped him if she had known he was Japanese? Why or why not?

C. Review the concept of characterization.

- i. I've provided a PowerPoint (**Teacher Handout #3**) that I use to teach this concept. (You could also use it as handouts or notes.) It has definitions and examples. Most ninth graders should already be familiar with these concepts, but it doesn't hurt to review them before you go on with the writing assignment.

D. Character trait application (optional). Have the students reflect on the character of Mrs. Wang in relation to your school's character traits. One method of group discussion is to have the students toss a "speaker's ball" or some object that allows only the holder to share his/her opinion.

Everyone else must be quiet and listen. Some discussion starters follow:

- i. What do you think of Mrs. Wang's idea that it would be better to invite the Japanese to tea and talk rather than fight?
- ii. Why does she not argue with Little Pig, even though she doesn't believe he is right?

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- iii. Would you sacrifice your life for your family like Mrs. Wang did? Do you think she was morally right to do that?
- E. Character Web: I like to have my students use Inspiration software to develop the character web for Old Mrs. Wang. They usually really enjoy using this software, and they can use it in the future to pre-write for any type of essay. You can also have them do it in the classroom with paper and pencil. The Old Mrs. Wang Character Map (**Teacher Handout #6**) has all of the instructions for the students.
 - i. First the students create a character web with Mrs. Wang in the center and description, thoughts, actions, and quotes as clusters around her. (based on characterization notes)
 - ii. Next the students need to go to the text and find examples of Mrs. Wang’s description, thoughts, actions, and quotes to fill out the clusters. These need to be exact quotes, and they need to record the page number for each example on the web.
 - iii. Next the students need to color code each detail by evaluating whether it is an example of ignorance, stupidity, or wisdom.
 - iv. Finally the students need to look at their web and determine which quality Mrs. Wang shows the most based on their color-coding. (You may choose to end the lesson with this activity if you don’t want to write an essay.)
- F. Literary Essay: The student will then follow the prompt found at the bottom of the character web assignment to write their literary essay. *Now that you’ve collected your information, evaluate Mrs. Wang. Was she wise, stupid, or ignorant? Or was she a combination of these traits? Write a literary response essay in which you evaluate Mrs. Wang. Be sure to use your examples from the text to support your opinion. Use internal notation conventions for your quotes.*
 - i. You can use the following site for references on internal notation conventions if you don’t have a text available.
<http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/research/mlaparen.html>
 - ii. I’ve included a rubric (**Teacher Handout #4**) for evaluating the essay. I always have the students peer-edit using a rubric so they know exactly how they will be evaluated. Then I use the same rubric to make the final evaluation. I require that they turn in the first and final draft of the writing to show revisions.
 - iii. For students that are unable to complete a full essay, you may limit the writing assignment to an extended paragraph.

VI. Assessment and Evaluation:

A. Formative assessment

- i. Character trait assessment
- ii. Small group reading circles

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- iii. Character web
- iv. Peer-editing using the rubric

B. Summative assessment

- i. Final evaluation of the literary essay using the same rubric that is used for the peer-editing.

VII. Idaho Achievement Standards:

Goal 2.1: Acquire Strategies and Skill for Comprehending Text

- 9.LA.2.1.3 Clarify an understanding of text by creating outlines, notes, annotations, charts, and/or diagrams.

Goal 2.3: Acquire Skills for Comprehending Literary Text

- 9.LA.2.3.2 Determine characters' traits by what the characters say about themselves in narration, dialogue, and soliloquy.

Goal 3.1: Acquire Prewriting Skills

- 9.LA.3.1.3 Apply organizational strategies to plan writing.
9.LA.3.1.4 Match format to purpose and audience.

Goal 4.4: Acquire Skills for Literary Response

- 9.LA.4.4.1 Write responses to literature that demonstrate an understanding of the significant ideas of literary works.

VIII. Follow Up or Extension Activities:

- A. Invite someone who knows about China (possibly a foreign exchange student, visitor, or member of Idaho's International Education Task Force) to come in to the class and present on Modern China as a pre-reading activity.
- B. Use the Extension Activity handout (**Teacher Handout #5**) to challenge those students that clearly don't need to complete the literary essay after the character web, and would be better served with more challenging research and writing. You could also use any of these activities for the entire class if you have additional time.
- C. Research Pearl S. Buck to better understand the perspective of the author.
- D. Read a full-length novel written by Pearl S. Buck.

Teacher Handout 1

The Taiping Rebellion
1851-64

<http://www-chaos.umd.edu/history/modern2.html>

Japanese invasion of
China

1931-1945

[http://www.chinavoc.com/history/
public/japaninvasion.htm](http://www.chinavoc.com/history/public/japaninvasion.htm)

[Foot binding](#) began late in the T'ang Dynasty (618-906) and it gradually spread through the upper class during the Song Dynasty (960-1297). During the Ming period (1368-1644) and the Ching Dynasty (1644-1911) the custom of foot binding spread through the overwhelming majority of the Chinese population until it was finally outlawed in the 1911 Revolution of Sun Yat-Sen.

Empress Dowager
1835-1908

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empress
Dowager Cixi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empress_Dowager_Cixi)



Teacher Handout 2

Location: China is the largest country entirely in Asia. China is bordered by Russia, India, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Myanmar, Kazakhstan, North Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Macau (semi-autonomous), Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Vietnam.

Capital: Beijing is the capital of China.

Size: China covers about 9,596,960 square kilometers. China is the fourth largest country in the world (after Russia, Canada, and the USA).

Population: China has the largest population of any country in the world. The population of China is about 1,261,832,482 (as of July, 2000). China is divided into 23 provinces, 5 autonomous regions, and 4 municipalities.

Flag: China's flag is red with five golden-yellow stars.

Climate: China's climate ranges from desert to tropical to subarctic.

Major Rivers: The major rivers in China are the Yangtse River, the Yellow River, and the Pearl River.

Mountain Ranges: The highest mountain range in the world, the Himalayas, borders China. Other major mountain ranges in China are the Ch'ang-pai Mountains, the Tsinling Mountains, and the Nan range.

Highest Point: The highest point in China is Mount Everest (8,850 m tall), in the Himalayas.

Lowest Point: The lowest point in China is Turpan Pendi (the Turpan Depression), 154 meters (505 feet) below sea level. It is located in northwestern China.

Teacher Handout 3

[China - Language Arts - Michelle George.ppt](#)

Teacher Handout 4

Writer _____ Editor _____
Essay Title _____

Literary Essay Writing Rubric

Below are specific features for evaluating an essay. Score each item from 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest.

FEATURES

	Revise	Accept	Superior Quality		
1. Introduction is clear, interesting, with a strong thesis.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The introduction includes the title (punctuated correctly) and author of the selection.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Appropriate vocabulary and word usage for the intended audience. Final draft includes at least two vocabulary upgrades.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Each body paragraph is developed with specific examples that support the topic sentence.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The final draft shows significant revisions from the first draft.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The body of the essay gives the author's opinion and supports it with examples from the text.	1	2	3	4	5
7. All quotes from the text have correct internal notations.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The body paragraphs have strong conclusions.	1	2	3	4	5

Teacher Handout 4

9. Every sentence is a complete sentence (subject and verb)

1 2 3 4 5

10. Mechanics are correct (i.e., punctuation, and spelling).

1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

EXTENSIONS MENU

“Old Demon”

Research the role of women in ancient Chinese society. Compare that to the role of women in modern China. You could also carry that comparison on to women in the U.S.	Research the history of flooding along the Yellow River in China. Create a chart that shows the patterns of natural events and human behavior over time.	Research the Japanese invasion into China. Prepare a PowerPoint presentation to share with the class.
Research historical trends in the development of Communism throughout the world.	Student Choice	Investigate how China’s government and economy is changing within the last twenty years.
Research the “One Child” policy in China today and analyze its purpose and effectiveness to date.	Investigate the Chinese writing system. Compare and contrast this system to our own.	Research Chinese music. Compare and contrast it to Western music.

Teacher Handout 5

A. 23 letters in Pinyin:

Let	Pronunciat	Let	Pronunciat	Letter	Pronunciation
B	As in bay	G	As in go	Sh	As in shirt
P	As in pay	K	As in kit	R	As in leisure
M	As in may	H	As in hit	Z	As in reads
F	As in fat	J	As in jeep	C	As in hats
D	As in dad	Q	As in cheer	S	As in say
T	As in time	X	As in she	Y	As in yes
N	As in nay	Zh	As in junk	W	As in way
L	As in lay	Ch	As in church		

B. Useful words and phrases:

1. Orientation and Geography

Pinyin	English	Pinyin	English	Pinyin	English
<i>dong</i>	East	<i>hu</i>	lake	<i>qu</i>	canal
<i>xi</i>	West	<i>he</i>	river	<i>jie</i>	street
<i>nan</i>	South	<i>shan</i>	mountain	<i>lu</i>	road
<i>bei</i>	North	<i>hai</i>	sea	<i>xiang</i>	lane
		<i>wan</i>	gulf		

2. Number

Number	Pinyin	Number	Pinyin	Number	Pinyin	Number	Pinyin
1	<i>yi</i>	6	<i>liu</i>	11	<i>shi yi</i>	31	<i>san shi yi</i>
2	<i>er</i>	7	<i>qi</i>	12	<i>shi er</i>	100	<i>yi bai</i>
3	<i>san</i>	8	<i>ba</i>	20	<i>er shi</i>	200	<i>er bai</i>
4	<i>si</i>	9	<i>jiu</i>	21	<i>er shi yi</i>	1,000	<i>yi qian</i>
5	<i>wu</i>	10	<i>shi</i>	30	<i>san shi</i>	10,000	<i>yi wan</i>

3. Useful phrases: Pronouns

English	Pinyin	English	Pinyin
I	<i>Wo</i>	hello	<i>Ni hao</i>
we/us	<i>women</i>	goodbye	<i>Zai jian</i>
you	<i>Ni / nimen(plural)</i>	thank you	<i>Xie xie</i>

Teacher Handout 5

he / she / it	<i>Ta</i>	please	<i>qing</i>
they / them	<i>tamen</i>	you're welcome	<i>Bu ke qi</i>
Excuse me	<i>Qing ni</i>	I'm sorry	<i>duibuqi</i>

English	Pinyin	English	Pinyin
How much is it?	<i>duoshao qian?</i>	train station	<i>huo che zhan</i>
That's too expensive.	<i>tai guile</i>	airport	<i>fei ji chang</i>
My name is...	<i>Wo jiao...</i>	bus station	<i>qi che zhan</i>
I'm from...	<i>Wo shi cong...laide.</i>	hotel	<i>jiu dian / fan dian</i>
Where is the...?	<i>...zai nali</i>	hospital	<i>yi yuan</i>
I'm lost.	<i>Wo mi lu le.</i>	restaurant	<i>can ting / fan dian</i>
What's the time?	<i>Ji dian le?</i>	shop	<i>shang dian</i>
I fell ill.	<i>Wo bu shu fu.</i>	police	<i>Jing cha</i>
Could you help me?	<i>ni ke yi bang wo ma?</i>	Restroom	<i>cesuo</i>
I would like...	<i>wo xiang yao...</i>	Train	<i>huo che</i>
I need	<i>Wo xu yao</i>	Taxi	<i>chuzu qi che</i>
I want to go to	<i>Wo yao qu</i>	Bank	<i>yinhang</i>
Do you have	<i>You mei you</i>	Book	<i>shu</i>
Here is my address	<i>Zhe shi wode dizhi</i>	Map	<i>Ditu</i>

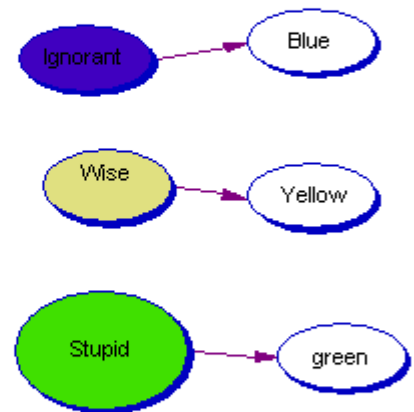
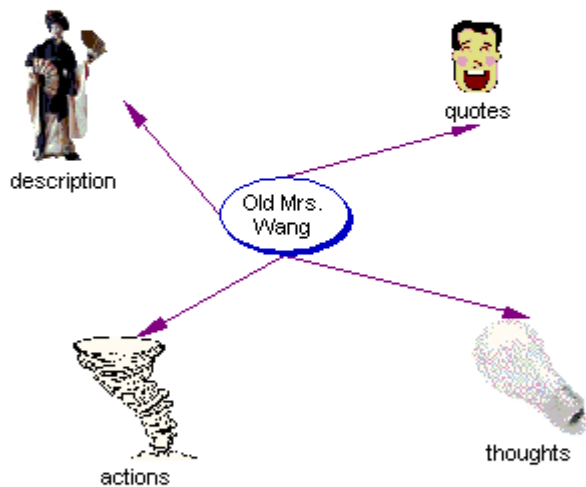
Teacher Handout 6

Character Web
Old Mrs. Wang
"The Old Demon"

Include your first and last name, and class period.

Requirements

*At least three examples for each category
*Be sure to evaluate each example as wise, ignorant or stupid. Color code each example using the key below. You need to provide the exact words from the text and the page number. Be sure to write a bibliographic note at the bottom of this web for the short story.



Now that you've collected your information, evaluate Mrs. Wang. Was she wise, stupid, or ignorant? Or was she a combination of these traits? Write a literary response essay in which you evaluate Mrs. Wang. Be sure to use your examples from the text to support your opinion. Use internal notation conventions for your quotes.

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